

CALIFORNIA OCEAN
PROTECTION COUNCIL

Staff Recommendation
June 10, 2005

California Derelict Fishing Gear Removal Pilot Project

Developed By: Sheila Semans

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Consideration of the California Derelict Fishing Gear Removal Pilot Project, and possible: 1) determination that it is a high priority project, and 2) authorization for the Council's Secretary to take actions needed to provide for its planning or implementation.

OCEAN or COASTAL LOCATION: Derelict fishing gear is likely found in the water along the entire coast of California. However this pilot project will concentrate on four coastal regions: in Humboldt County, from Humboldt Bay to Trinidad Head; in Monterey County, from Elkhorn Slough to Point Lobos; in San Luis Obispo County, from Point Estero to Point Buchon; and in Los Angeles County, at Santa Catalina Island.

AGENCY OR ENTITY RECOMMENDING PROJECT: State Coastal Conservancy; Regents of the University of California, Davis Campus, Wildlife Heath Center, SeaDoc Society

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: Project Location and Site Maps

Exhibit 2: Letters of Support

RESOLUTION:

"The Ocean Protection Council finds pursuant to Sections 35600 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code that the California Derelict Fishing Gear Removal Pilot Project, as herein described, is of high priority for ocean conservation and authorizes the Secretary to take actions necessary for its planning or implementation, including the allocation of up to \$300,000 of ocean protection funds reserved by the Coastal Conservancy for use in this project"

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Derelict fishing gear is defined as lost or abandoned fishing nets, lines, pots, and other commercial and recreational fishing gear that sits on the seafloor, gets caught on rocky reefs, or floats in the water column. The majority of this gear does not decompose in seawater and can remain in the marine environment for years. Derelict gear impacts the marine environment in several ways: it can continue to "catch" marine animals, which become enmeshed or trapped; it

DERELICT FISHING GEAR REMOVAL PILOT PROJECT

can damage the habitat upon which it becomes entangled or upon which it rests; it can pose an underwater hazard for boaters, entangling boat propellers and anchors; and it can similarly endanger humans, especially divers. It is also a visual blight on the seafloor, diminishing the natural aesthetic quality of the seafloor and rocky reef habitat.

Staff recommends that the Ocean Protection Council find that the California Derelict Fishing Gear Removal Pilot Project is of high priority and authorize the Secretary to the Council to take actions necessary to provide for its planning and implementation. A proposed \$300,000 grant from the Coastal Conservancy to the Regents of the University of California, Davis Campus, Wildlife Heath Center, SeaDoc Society, together with \$70,000 in federal and private funds, would provide initial funding of a pilot project for the removal of derelict fishing gear off the coast of California. The SeaDoc Society is a university-based marine science program focused on improving the health of marine wildlife and ecosystems in California and Washington State. For the proposed project, the SeaDoc Society will target portions of four coastal counties in California:

Humboldt County, from Humboldt Bay to Trinidad Head

Monterey County, from Elkhorn Slough to Point Lobos

San Luis Obispo County, from Point Estero to Point Buchon

Los Angeles County, Santa Catalina Island

These four coastal areas have been chosen for initial investigation because they offer a wide range of habitats, lost gear circumstances, and weather conditions that will fully test the program. The main objective of this pilot project will be to better determine the extent of the problem off the coast of California, and if warranted, position the project for long-term operation by developing, implementing, testing and refining all facets of the program, including:

- Field-testing standard operating procedures for gear location and removal operations;
- Training personnel, divers and contractors;
- Creating outreach materials, a phone-in hotline and a website;
- Informing and involving a broad range of stakeholders;
- Identifying sources of future funding for long-term support;
- Determining appropriate permission/authorization/approvals needed for future work.

The following types of fishing gear are used commonly in California marine waters and are therefore the types of gear most likely to be encountered as derelict (including gear once used heavily but now either severely limited or no longer allowed in California):

Gill nets: Gill nets are curtain-like nets that are suspended in the water with mesh openings large enough to permit only the heads of the targeted species to pass through. Gill nets are now largely restricted for use in deeper water 1 –10 miles from shore, and prohibited for use north of Point Reyes, Marin County. Gill nets are primarily used to catch halibut, herring, nearshore finfish and groundfish (largely historic), sheep crabs, sharks, salmon, and herring.

Purse seine nets: Purse seines are nets that are cast in a circle around a school of fish, and then drawn closed at the bottom to prevent escape. Purse seine nets are used to catch coastal pelagic

DERELICT FISHING GEAR REMOVAL PILOT PROJECT

species like sardines, anchovies, squid, mackerel, some tuna species, white croaker, perch, smelt, and squid.

Trawl nets: Trawl nets are nets or mesh bags that are dragged at various depths or along the ocean bottom. They are used to catch halibut, ocean and bay shrimp, nearshore finfish and groundfish, and sea cucumbers. Commercial use of trawl nets is prohibited within 3 miles of shore in California.

Long lines: Long lines are comprised of a long main line to which are attached a large number of hooks. They are used for catching salmon, nearshore finfish and groundfish, sharks, tuna, dorado, and striped bass.

Pots and traps: Various types of pots, traps and baited hoop nets are used in both the commercial and recreational fisheries to catch shrimp, lobster, crabs, and nearshore finfish.

Recreational fishing gear: Lost or abandoned gear from recreational rod and reel and pot/trap fisheries can consist of lines, weights, hooks, flashers, downrigger wire, jugs, and pots.

The presence of derelict gear will be located by conducting sidescan sonar surveys, using remotely operated underwater cameras, initiating SCUBA surveys, or through the opportunistic locating and reporting of lost gear by those who encounter it in the marine environment. Reasonable efforts will be made to coordinate habitat mapping with other efforts going on in the state. Derelict gear will be removed in depths no greater than 100ft, and in such a way as to minimize disturbance of the marine environment. If the process of removing the gear is going to damage the habitat more than the gear itself, the derelict gear will be modified in place (e.g. nets can be cut at their base or bundled in place, or pots/traps can be secured in an open position). These decisions about gear removal and impact to local habitats will be made by the derelict gear removal team, in consultation with local state and federal agency partners knowledgeable about the local habitats. Extensive data on gear, habitats, and marine resources will be kept on all activities of the program, posted on a public website, and distributed to management agencies when warranted.

This proposed project would be a no-fault program that encourages ocean users to report gear without the threat of fines or retribution. Best efforts will be made to return gear that is clearly labeled with an owner name. Gear that cannot be repatriated will be either recycled or disposed.

All divers contracted to perform gear removal will hold commercial diving certification. Washington State's gear removal program has become a source of offseason employment for commercial urchins and sea cucumber divers. Because these divers are already very familiar with the local habitats, California's program will look to employ commercial fisherman in the same way.

The proposed project has benefits to Californians and visitors alike. Anyone who utilizes nearshore waters for boating, fishing and diving will benefit through increased safety provided by removal of underwater hazards. Commercial and recreational fishers will benefit through the potential repatriation of lost gear. Also, non-fishing industries (e.g. the U.S. military, telecommunications companies) will benefit from the removal of gear that entangles equipment and structures or prevents its placement underwater. The state resources agencies will benefit by having a program that reduces the loss of commercially and recreationally valuable marine

DERELICT FISHING GEAR REMOVAL PILOT PROJECT

organisms from state waters, and provides a higher level of protection for threatened and endangered species. But ultimately, it is the living marine resources and unique underwater habitats of California that will benefit from the removal of derelict gear that injures and kills animals or damages habitats.

PROJECT FINANCING

Possible Funding Sources:

Coastal Conservancy	\$300,000
Laurel Foundation	20,000
NOAA	<u>50,000</u>
Total Project Cost	\$370,000

On May 18, 2005, the State Coastal Conservancy reserved up to \$5,000,000 of its available funds to be expended in concert with the Council for programs and projects that the Council finds to be of high priority, and that are also consistent with the Coastal Conservancy's project criteria, priorities, and funding sources. Conservancy staff is recommending a grant of \$300,000 to the SeaDoc Society for consideration at the Conservancy's next public meeting on June 16. The Laurel Foundation awarded two grants, totaling \$20,000, to the SeaDoc Society for this project, and NOAA has also committed funding for the project.

CONSISTENCY WITH CALIFORNIA'S OCEAN ACTION STRATEGY: The proposed project is consistent with action item 13 in that it addresses restoration of threatened habitats, water quality and other impacts from development (see Action Strategy pg. 32). Furthermore, the proposed project seeks to maximize funding opportunities for projects that restore important intertidal and subtidal habitats (*id.* pg. 35).

CONSISTENCY WITH OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL'S INTERIM PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:

Mandatory Criteria

1. **Furtheres the following statutory purposes and policies of the Ocean Protection Act:**
 - **Improves management, conservation, and protection of coastal waters and ocean ecosystems:** Derelict gear left in the marine environment can continue to "catch" marine animals, including endangered species, and/or damage the habitat upon which they rely for survival. By removing derelict gear, the proposed project seeks to eliminate an ongoing threat to marine life, thereby improving the health and diversity of important marine ecosystems.
 - **Encourages those activities and uses that are consistent with sustainable, long-term protection and conservation of ocean and coastal resources:** Working with fishers and other ocean users to obtain information on lost gear through a no-fault reporting system will result in faster gear retrieval and fewer impacts to the marine environment.

DERELICT FISHING GEAR REMOVAL PILOT PROJECT

- **Promotes aesthetic, educational and recreational uses of the coast and ocean:** By removing lost nets, pots, traps and long lines, and any animals caught in them, the proposed project will improve the aesthetic quality of marine habitats for recreational divers, as well as improve safety conditions. Derelict gear can also become an underwater hazard for boaters, entangling boat propellers and anchors, or can endanger humans, especially recreational and commercial divers.
 - **Improves monitoring, data gathering, and advances in scientific understanding of the ocean and coastal environment:** All data on underwater habitats gathered during the operation of this program will be made available through a public website, unless considered confidential by resource agencies (e.g. discovery of new cultural artifacts). Any mapping needed to find lost gear will be carried out in coordination with other mapping efforts going on around the state to ensure the integration of data.
 - **Improves the health of fish and fosters sustainable fisheries in ocean and coastal waters:** Removing lost gear that continues to “fish” will cut down on the unintended take of commercially important species and allow for better run commercial fisheries.
 - **Helps to integrate and coordinate the state’s laws and institutions responsible for protecting and conserving ocean and coastal resources:** The main objective of this pilot project will be to better determine the extent of the problem off the coast of California, and if warranted, position the project for long-term operation by developing, implementing, testing and refining all facets of the program. This will require the involvement and cooperation of all the state and federal agencies responsible for ocean resource protection. The SeaDoc Society has formed strong relationships with gear removal programs in other states, and has already coordinated closely with the Department of Fish and Game, the California Coastal Commission, the National Marine Sanctuaries, and many other agencies with management responsibilities in the marine environment.
 - **Helps to coordinate the collection and sharing of scientific data:** As stated above, all data collected during the operation of the pilot project will be shared with the appropriate agencies and/or institutions. Agency input and feedback will be especially critical for the formation of sound program protocols. Additionally, any underwater mapping needed to find lost gear will be carried out in coordination with other mapping efforts going on around the state to ensure data integration.
2. **Consistent with the purposes of the funding source:** See Project Financing Section above.
 3. **Has demonstrable support from the public:** The project is supported by state legislators, research institutions, non-governmental organizations, and federal and state government agencies. Letters of support are attached as Exhibit 2.
 4. **Relates directly to the ocean, coast, associated estuaries, and coastal-draining watersheds:** This project will take place entirely within California’s nearshore coastal waters out to a depth of 100 feet.
 5. **Has greater-than-local interest:** The citizens of California and the many tourists who visit the California coast to recreate (e.g. divers, boaters, surfers) will benefit from this project through the increased safety provided by the removal of underwater hazards. Commercial and recreational fishers will benefit through the potential repatriation of lost gear. Non-fishing industries (e.g. the U.S. military, telecommunications companies) will benefit from the removal of gear that entangles equipment and structures or prevents its placement

DERELICT FISHING GEAR REMOVAL PILOT PROJECT

underwater, and state resources agencies will benefit by having a program that reduces the loss of commercially and recreationally valuable marine organisms from state waters, provides a higher level of protection for threatened and endangered species, and provides more information on critical coastal habitats.

Additional Criteria

1. **Helps implement the California Ocean and Coastal Information, Research, and Outreach Strategy and other priorities of local, state or federal advisory groups, or scientific or policy reports, adopted by the council:** See Consistency with California's Ocean Action Strategy above.
2. **The project has an element of urgency (there is an immediate threat to a coastal/ ocean resource from development or natural or economic conditions, a pressing need, or a fleeting opportunity):** Derelict gear continues to "fish" passively even though abandoned. Removal of this gear increases the security and recovery of many of California's marine species.
3. **The project helps resolve more than one issue:** Gear is often lost in the marine environment when lines get cut by boat propellers or get dragged away by large vessels or strong currents. The proposed project will return any lost gear that is clearly labeled, thereby relieving the need to replace expensive gear. The proposed project therefore has potential economic as well as resource benefits.
4. **The project involves innovation (e.g. environmental or economic demonstration):** It may be necessary to locate lost gear through side scan sonar surveys, but at a frequency not commonly used in the marine environment for habitat mapping. This technology will provide much more detail about hard structures on the sea floor and highlight any other marine debris that may be of concern. The proposed project will also develop protocols for gear removal unique to a variety of marine ecosystems.
5. **The project is ready to implement (grantee or contractor will start and finish the project in a timely manner):** The SeaDoc Society has done a great deal of research on this problem in California and in other states with similar programs, and has made a compelling case for the need of this program. By talking to researchers, resource managers, commercial divers and others who frequent these nearshore environments, enough evidence has been produced to warrant a pilot investigation. By coordinating with gear removal programs already underway in other states, the SeaDoc Society has prepared a one year pilot program for California that is well thought-out and ready to be implemented.
6. **The project involves a combination of local, state, or federal agencies or is a public/private partnership:** The SeaDoc Society has worked closely with the Department of Fish and Game, the Coastal Commission, The State and Regional Water Boards, the State Lands Commission and the Department of Parks and Recreation on the state level, as well as the National Marine Sanctuaries and the US Army Corps of Engineers on the federal level for both programmatic support and in securing the appropriate permits. They also intend on employing off-season commercial divers to participate in gear removal operations.

Exhibit 1: Project Location Map. Circled areas indicate focus areas for the project, offshore to a maximum depth of 100 feet.

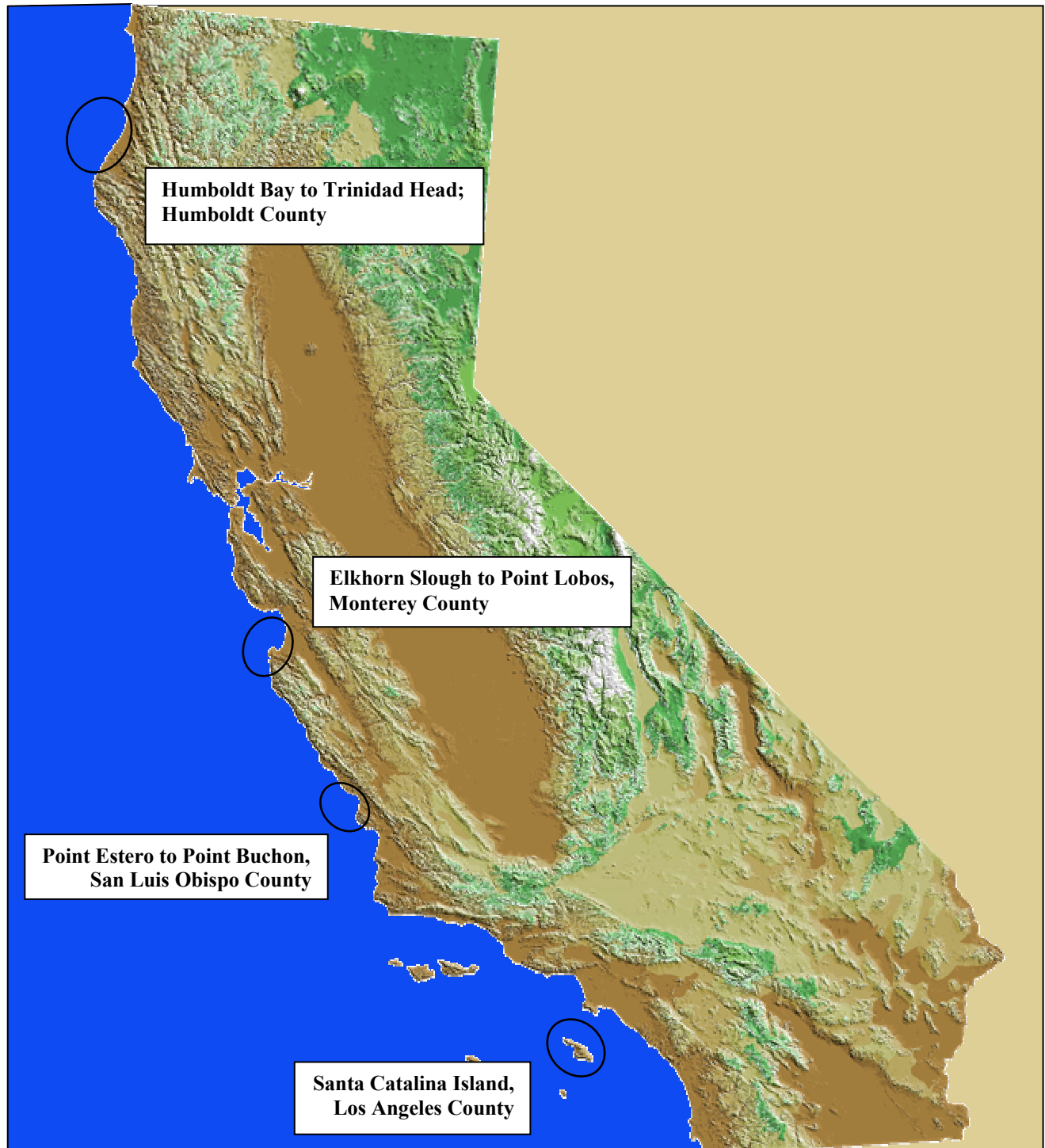


Exhibit 4: Letters of Support

BARBARA BOXER
CALIFORNIA

United States Senate

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COMMITTEES:
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AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS

June 3, 2005

SHILA

The Honorable Douglas Bosco
Chair, State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100
Oakland, California 94612

Dear Mr. Bosco:

I am writing to express my strong support for the grant proposal from the University of California, Davis Wildlife Health Center SeaDoc Society to fund the California Derelict Fishing Gear Removal Pilot Project. If awarded, this grant will allow experienced and certified divers to remove tons of derelict fishing gear from coastal regions in the counties of Humboldt, Monterey, San Luis Obispo and Los Angeles in a safe and environmentally-sensitive manner.

Derelict fishing gear, such as lost or abandoned commercial fishing nets, lines, pots, traps, and other recreational equipment, sits on the seafloor, gets caught on rocky reefs, or floats in the water column. This equipment has a negative impact the environment and can be dangerous to humans, as well as sea creatures. Such gear can "catch" marine animals, which become entangled or trapped; it can pose an underwater hazard for boaters, entangling propellers and anchors, and endangering divers; and it can also diminish the natural aesthetic quality of the seafloor and reef habitat.

The California Derelict Fishing Gear Removal Pilot Project is an important step in an effort to help restore ocean health. While this project benefits the citizens and economy of California, ultimately it is the living marine resources and unique underwater habitats of the Pacific Ocean that will benefit from the removal of derelict gear that injures and kills animals or enshrouds and damages habitat.

In advance, I thank you for your consideration of this request. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact my Deputy State Director, Stacey Lybeck, at (916) 448-2787.

Sincerely,



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

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JUN 06 2005

COASTAL CONSERVANCY
OAKLAND, CALIF.

BB:srl

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SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
(916) 448-2787

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FRESNO, CA 93721
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Assembly California Legislature



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ASSEMBLYMEMBER, FIRST DISTRICT

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CALIFORNIA PORTS
CALIFORNIA WINE
COASTAL PROTECTION
EARTHQUAKE SAFETY & PREPAREDNESS
ELDER ABUSE
RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

June 6, 2005

The Honorable Douglas Bosco
Chair, State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100
Oakland, CA 94612

RE: Support for California Derelict Fishing Gear Removal Pilot Project

Dear Mr. Bosco:

We are writing to express our strong support for the grant proposal from the UC Davis Wildlife Health Center SeaDoc Society to fund the *California Derelict Fishing Gear Removal Pilot Project*. This will employ experienced and certified divers to remove tons of gear from near-shore waters in a safe and environmentally sensitive manner.

Derelict fishing gear, such as lost or abandoned commercial fishing nets, lines, pots, traps, and other recreational gear, sits on the seafloor, gets caught on rocky reefs, or floats in the water column. This equipment has a negative impact the environment and can be dangerous to humans and sea creatures alike. Such gear can continue to "catch" marine animals, which become entangled or trapped; it can pose an underwater hazard for boaters, entangling propellers and anchors, and endangering divers; Derelict fishing gear can also diminish the natural aesthetic quality of the seafloor and rocky reef habitat.

The pilot project will position the program for long-term operation within the State of California by developing, implementing, testing and refining all facets of the program. The work will initially be focused in the following four areas of the coast:

- Humboldt County: from Humboldt Bay north to Trinidad Head
- Monterey County: from Elkhorn Slough to Point Lobos
- San Luis Obispo County: from Point Estero to Point Buchon
- Los Angeles County: around Santa Catalina Island

These field sites were selected because of known presence of derelict gear, historical and current fishing activities (which confer a high likelihood of gear presence), and/or because of the potential for entanglement of wildlife species of concern, divers, and/or vessels.



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Assembly California Legislature



PATTY BERG
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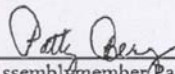
JOINT COMMITTEE:
FISHERIES & AQUACULTURE, Chair

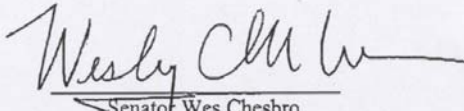
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CALIFORNIA PORTS
CALIFORNIA WINE
COASTAL PROTECTION
EARTHQUAKE SAFETY & PREPAREDNESS
ELDER ABUSE
RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The citizens of California will benefit from this project through the increased safety provided by removal of underwater hazards. Individual fishermen will benefit from any gear that is returned to them and through safer navigation and decreased potential for entanglement. As well, non-fishing industries will benefit from the removal of gear that entangles equipment and structures or prevents its placement underwater. The state resources agencies will benefit by having a permanent program in place that reduces the loss of commercially and recreationally valuable marine organisms from state waters, and provides a higher level of protection for threatened and endangered species. Ultimately, it is the living marine resources and unique underwater habitats of California that will benefit from the removal of derelict gear that injures and kills animals or enshrouds and damages habitat.

We urge you to give this program your utmost consideration for support.

Sincerely,


Assemblymember Patty Berg


Senator Wes Chesbro

PB/mm

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Assembly California Legislature



LOIS WOLK
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, EIGHTH DISTRICT

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Budget Subcommittee on
Information Technology and Transportation
Select Committee
Water, Infrastructure and the Economy
Boards
California Public Library Construction
and Renovation Board
Wildlife Conservation Board

June 2, 2005

SHEILA

The Honorable Douglas Bosco
Chair, State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100
Oakland, CA 94612

RE: Support for California Derelict Fishing Gear Removal Pilot Project

Dear Mr. Bosco:

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These field sites were selected because of known presence of derelict gear, historical and current fishing activities (which confer a high likelihood of gear presence), and/or because of the potential for entanglement of wildlife species of concern, divers, and/or vessels.

The citizens of California will benefit from this project through the increased safety provided by removal of underwater hazards. Individual fishermen will benefit from any gear that is returned

to them and through safer navigation and decreased potential for entanglement. As well, non-fishing industries will benefit from the removal of gear that entangles equipment and structures or prevents its placement underwater. The state resources agencies will benefit by having a permanent program in place that reduces the loss of commercially and recreationally valuable marine organisms from state waters, and provides a higher level of protection for threatened and endangered species. Ultimately, it is the living marine resources and unique underwater habitats of California that will benefit from the removal of derelict gear that injures and kills animals or enshrouds and damages habitat.

I urge you to give this program your utmost consideration for support.

Sincerely,



LOIS WOLK
Assemblywoman, 8th AD

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JUN 06 2005

COASTAL CONSERVANCY
OAKLAND, CALIF.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE

Cordell Bank
National Marine Sanctuary
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Olema, CA 94950
Ph: (415) 663-0314
Fax: (415) 663-0315

June 7, 2005

Douglas Bosco
Chairman
State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mr. Bosco:

As Manager of the Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary, I wish to commend the State Coastal Conservancy for considering a proposal from the SeaDoc Society at UC Davis to develop a derelict fishing gear removal program in California. As you may know, we have documented a significant amount of derelict fishing gear on Cordell Bank in the course of conducting surveys of the Bank using manned submersibles: in 2002, we observed derelict gear on 66% of the transects surveyed. Most of it is long line gear that negatively impacts the unique habitat of the Bank by damaging the fragile bottom community and creating artificial substrates upon which organisms attach. Some of the larger hydrocorals living on the Bank are estimated to be at least 40 years old.

We have identified the presence of derelict fishing gear as a stressor on the Cordell Bank ecosystem, and are looking forward to working with UC Davis' SeaDoc Society to remove it, once their pilot project has been completed and they are well-positioned to expand their operations offshore and into deeper water.

Sincerely,

Dan Howard
Manager, Cordell Bank NMS



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Alan C. Lloyd, Ph.D.
Agency Secretary

State Water Resources Control Board

Division of Water Quality

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Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor

JUN 3 2005

Douglas Bosco
Chairman
State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mr. Bosco:

I am writing to express my support for the SeaDoc Society's proposal to the State Coastal Conservancy for funding to conduct a pilot derelict fishing gear removal program in California. I am not speaking officially on behalf of the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board), but rather as an individual working as a Senior Environmental Scientist with the Ocean Standards Unit, Division of Water Quality, at the State Board.

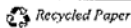
At the State Board my mission is to protect the quality of our state's coastal marine waters. I have had discussions with the Executive Director of SeaDoc, Kirsten Gilardi, to ensure that the proposed project activities will not degrade marine water quality. I have given Ms. Gilardi information regarding the California Ocean Plan and the State Board's relevant regulatory programs, so that the subject project may be performed in compliance with the State's water quality laws and regulations. I have further recommended that Ms. Gilardi contact the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Boards to ensure that water quality will be protected during the extraction of derelict gear.

Derelict fishing gear degrades marine habitats and is a known hazard to marine life. The removal of derelict gear will be highly beneficial, thereby restoring natural conditions to marine habitat and protecting marine life, navigation, and recreational uses. I urge you to give this program your utmost consideration for support.

Sincerely,

Dominic Gregorio, Chief
Ocean Unit

California Environmental Protection Agency



Chuck Wise
President
David Ritts
Vice-President
Larry Miyamura
Secretary
Marlyse Patriotella
Treasurer
In Memoriam:
Nathaniel S. Bingham
Harold C. Christensen

PACIFIC COAST FEDERATION of FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS

W.H. "Zeke" Grader, Jr.
Executive Director
Glen H. Spain
Northwest Regional Director
Mueli Farro
Fishery Enhancement Director
Vivian Bolin
Watershed Conservation Director
Duncan MacLean
Salmon Advisor

Please Respond to:
California Office
P.O. Box 29370
San Francisco, CA 94129-0370
Tel: (415) 561-5080
Fax: (415) 561-5464

<http://www.pcffa.org>

Northwest Office
P.O. Box 11170
Eugene, OR 97440-3370
Tel: (541) 689-2000
Fax: (541) 689-2500

26 May 2005

The Honorable Douglas H. Bosco, Chairman
California Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100
Oakland, CA 94612

RE: California Derelict Fishing Gear Removal Program - Support

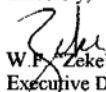
Dear Chairman Bosco:

The Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations (PCFFA), representing working men and women in the West Coast commercial fishing fleet, requests your support for the SeaDoc Society's proposal to the Conservancy to develop the California Derelict Fishing Gear Removal program. The prevention of fishing gear loss and the retrieval of lost gear has long been a concern of PCFFA. We have supported legislation/regulations to encourage removal of lost gear and sponsored measures to prevent gear loss, such as Mr. Leno's AB 749 aimed at reducing the number of Dungeness crab traps lost each year in that fishery.

Derelict fishing gear is problematic for our members, because it can obstruct deployment of gear. Moreover, our members are always pleased to receive back any gear they have lost unintentionally - all too often lines attaching gear to buoys get cut by boat propellers, or gear is dragged away by large vessels or by strong currents and waves. Fishing gear is costly and getting it back helps, but it also helps to get rid of old gear off the seafloor which sometimes will keep fishing or, in some instances, entangle other fishing gear or wildlife.

The proposed derelict fishing gear removal program, which initially will deploy divers to remove gear, should be a huge benefit to California's fishing men and women, both commercial and recreational, as well as the marine environment. We look forward to working with your Commission and the SeaDoc Society in implementing the pilot year of this program in California.

Sincerely,


W.H. "Zeke" Grader, Jr.
Executive Director

STEWARDS OF THE FISHERIES

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

45 FREMONT, SUITE 2000
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105-2219
VOICE AND TDD (415) 904-5200
FAX (415) 904-5400



May 16, 2005

Douglas Bosco
Chairman
State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100
Oakland, California 94612

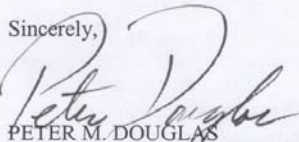
RE: **SeaDoc Society's Pilot Derelict Fishing Gear Removal Program**

Dear Mr. Bosco:

I am writing to express our support for the University of California at Davis's SeaDoc Society proposal to the State Coastal Conservancy to fund a pilot derelict fishing gear removal program. The Coastal Commission is concerned with the presence of derelict fishing gear (e.g., "ghost" nets) in California marine waters, and we have encouraged and now are pleased that the SeaDoc Society has developed a program for its removal.

The executive director of the SeaDoc Society, Kirsten Gilardi, is consulting with my staff to ensure that the fishing gear removal program itself is designed in a manner that avoids or minimizes potential adverse impacts to coastal resources and uses. On a case-by-case basis, Coastal Commission staff will determine if a coastal development permit is needed for a specific derelict fishing gear removal activity. We are confident that the program will be highly beneficial to the health and integrity of California's marine waters, making it a safer environment for boaters, divers, swimmers, and marine life. I strongly urge you to support this program.

Sincerely,


PETER M. DOUGLAS
Executive Director

RECEIVED

MAY 17 2005

COASTAL CONSERVANCY
OAKLAND, CALIF.



State of California - The Resources Agency

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
Office of Spill Prevention and Response
Marine Wildlife Veterinary Care and Research Center
1451 Shaffer Road
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 469-1744
(831) 469-1723 fax



Douglas Bosco, Chairman
State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mr. Bosco:

I am writing to express my strong support for the UC Davis Wildlife Health Center's SeaDoc Society's proposal to the State Coastal Conservancy to develop a California Derelict Fishing Gear Removal program. I am Supervisor of the California Department of Fish and Game's Marine Wildlife Veterinary Care and Research Center (in Santa Cruz), and oversee several southern sea otter research and management activities in state marine waters. As you probably know, the southern sea otter population has failed to recover at an expected rate. A significant factor in the failure of the population to grow is infectious disease, but we are also concerned about fisheries interactions. Sea otters are vulnerable to entanglement and entrapment in fishing gear, including commercial and recreational crab pots. As you may know experiments at the Monterey Bay Aquarium suggest that sea otters can enter live fish traps and crab pots and are unlikely to get out easily. We have provided the Fish and Game Commission with measurements for excluder devices that may reduce sea otter by catch in live fish traps. Currently we are working with crab fishers to develop excluder devices that might greatly limit potential for sea otter entry into commercial crab pots but which will not significantly reduce catch. We also conduct post-mortem examinations on all dead sea otters that wash up on California beaches. Several of them have died from entanglement in derelict fishing gear.

For these reasons, I am very supportive of a program that will work with the fishing industry and systematically remove derelict fishing gear from the state's marine waters, especially from parts of the coast where we are trying to help recover threatened and endangered species like the southern sea otter. Please feel free to call me at 831-469-1726 if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

David A. Jessup
Senior Wildlife Veterinarian/Supervisor

Conserving California's Wildlife Since 1870



NORTHWEST STRAITS
marine conservation initiative

May 13, 2005

Douglas Bosco
Chairman
State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mr. Bosco:

I am writing to express my strong support for the SeaDoc Society's proposal to the State Coastal Conservancy for funding to conduct a pilot derelict fishing gear removal program in California. While I am a member of the SeaDoc Society's Advisory Board, the hat I wear in writing this letter to you is as Director of the Northwest Straits Commission (Mt. Vernon, Washington).

In 2002, the Northwest Straits Commission developed and implemented a derelict fishing gear removal program here in Washington, which we conduct in close partnership with NOAA, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and other partners. Our program has successfully removed nearly 1000 nets, pots and traps since 2002. In this recovered derelict fishing gear, we have counted nearly 500 entangled fish—including endangered salmon and rockfish species—and over 1000 live and dead crabs, 90 dead birds, and 4 drowned marine mammals.

Over the last several months, I have provided assistance and guidance to the SeaDoc's Executive Director, Dr. Kirsten Gilardi, in her development of a program plan for California. The Northwest Straits Commission looks forward to continuing to work with Gilardi and SeaDoc on the pilot year of this program, and we remain eager and willing to share information, policies and procedures, and expertise.

As well, we are receiving a new grant from NOAA in July to replicate our program in other areas around the United States. In our application, we specifically identified California as one of those areas, and are looking forward to spending a portion of the new federal funding to support SeaDoc Society's efforts in California.

Sincerely,

Tom Cowan

Northwest Straits Commission
10441 Bayview-Edison Road
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-9668
phone: 360.428.1084
fax: 360.428.1491
e-mail: commission@nwstraits.org
web: www.nwstraits.org

County Marine
Resource Committees:

Columbia

Island

Jefferson

San Juan

Skagit

Snohomish

Whatcom

In Cooperation with
Participating Tribal
Co-Managers

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

MARINE REGION

619 Second Street
EUREKA, CA 95501May 11th, 2005Douglas Bosco
Chairman
State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mr. Bosco:

I am writing to express my support for the SeaDoc Society's proposal to the State Coastal Conservancy to develop the California Derelict Fishing Gear Removal program. I am a fisheries enforcement officer with the California Department of Fish and Game. I am assigned to a patrol vessel at our Eureka regional office. Every year I receive several complaints from licensed commercial fishermen, recreational fishermen, and the boating community about the presence of derelict crab pots in the waters off the North Coast.

Although required by law to be removed (F&G Code 9004), these traps are left in the waters of the state beyond the legal season. Efforts by commercial fishermen and our agency are ineffective at removing all the gear that is out there. These derelict traps present numerous hazards to fishermen and boaters. In addition to the safety hazards, the traps may also be having a negative effect on the fishery. The traps are required to be outfitted with a destruct device (F&G Code 9003). This device causes portions of the trap to degrade and prevent further capture of marine life. Unfortunately, many traps have been outfitted improperly, illegally, or the device does not function. These lost traps continue to catch crabs and invertebrates for many years.

The proposed derelict fishing gear removal program will benefit area fishermen and aid their compliance with state regulations. We look forward to working with the SeaDoc Society in implementing the pilot year of this program off our North Coast.

Please feel free to contact me for any additional information concerning state fishery regulations.

Sincerely,

Warden Robert Farrell
Patrol Boat ALBACORE
619 2nd St.
Eureka, CA 95501
(707) 268-8824

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Marine Region
213 Beach Street
Morro Bay, CA 93442
(805) 772-0114

May 12, 2005

Douglas Bosco
Chairman
State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mr. Bosco:

I am writing to encourage you to consider supporting the SeaDoc Society's proposal to the State Coastal Conservancy to develop the California Derelict Fishing Gear Removal program. I am an Associate Biologist (Marine/Fisheries) in the Marine Region of the California Department of Fish and Game, in Morro Bay. Throughout my 24 year career I have participated in many underwater surveys (remotely operated vehicle and scuba diving) along the California coast and the Channel Islands. Unfortunately, I have observed an increase in the amount of derelict fishing gear in our state marine waters over the years. Not only is this a concern because of the potential hazard the derelict gear pose to boaters and divers, but also the potential impact this gear has on the marine habitat and resources. In addition, the derelict gear is a form of trash and does not belong in our ocean.

The proposed derelict fishing gear removal program will benefit our coastal marine environment. I look forward to working with the SeaDoc Society in implementing the pilot year of this program in the Morro Bay Area.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Ms. Christine Pattison, Associate Biologist in the Department's Marine Region, at (805) 772-0114.

Sincerely,



Christine Pattison



May 12, 2005

Douglas Bosco
Chairman
State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100
Oakland, CA 94612

The Marine Mammal Center
Marin Headlands
1065 Fort Cronkhite
Sausalito, California 94965-2697
Fax 415.289.7333

Tel 415.289.5EAL
www.tmmc.org

Monterey Bay Operations
P.O. Box 778
Marina del Rey, California 90339

San Luis Obispo Operations
P.O. Box 696
Morro Bay, California 93443

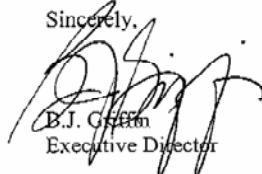
Anchor Bay Operations
P.O. Box 381
Causalita, California 95445

Dear Mr. Bosco:

I am writing to express my strong support for the SeaDoc Society's plan to develop a derelict fishing gear removal program in California. I am Executive Director of The Marine Mammal Center, the largest marine mammal rehabilitation organization on the North American west coast. Every year, we care for hundreds of seals and sea lions that strand up and down the California coast; and every year, we care for several animals that come in to our center with severe injuries due to entanglement in fishing gear. Some of them have pieces of net or line wrapped around their necks, while others have swallowed hooks and monofilament which have perforated their gastrointestinal tracts.

The proposed derelict fishing gear removal program would significantly improve the quality of the coastal marine environment we share with our native wildlife, making it a safer place for them to forage and migrate. We are very pleased that the SeaDoc Society is implementing a program for derelict fishing gear removal off our coast, and look forward to documenting fewer and fewer cases of gear-related injuries in our wildlife patients as a result.

Sincerely,



B.J. Gorman
Executive Director